



HANDHELDS NEWS

■ SMALLER GOOGLE SEARCHES

Google has announced the launch of Google Mobile Web Search, a new service that allows mobile phone users to access an index of web pages designed specifically for a mobile phone's smaller screen. Viewing websites designed for a PC monitor on the smaller screen of a phone can cause problems with text and image alignment, but many websites have realigned text, graphics and tables to make them easier to navigate with a mobile browser. To access the service, go to www.google.com using your mobile phone and select the Mobile Web (Beta) option.

■ WINDOWS MOBILE 5.0 UPGRADE FOR POCKET LOOX

Fujitsu Siemens has joined Dell and HP in offering an upgrade to Windows Mobile 5.0 on its Pocket Loox range of PDAs. The upgrade will be released in the autumn at

www.pocketloox-choice.com, but will be available only for the high-end Pocket Loox 718 and 720 models.

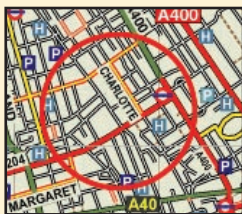
Dell has already announced an upgrade for its Axim X50 range. HP is to offer

Windows Mobile 5.0 on its iPAQ hx2100, hx2400, hx2700 and hx4700 PDA ranges when it is released. However, no manufacturer has yet announced a price for the upgrade.

■ THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

A new service that enables parents to keep track of the whereabouts of their children was launched at the beginning of July. The KidsOK

service (www.kidsok.net) aims to help avoid embarrassing the child with a phone call from their parents demanding to know where they are. Instead, the parent can send a text to KidsOK, and they will receive a map showing the location of their child as a multimedia message (MMS). Both parent and child have to register with the service first. The service costs £40 per year, and this includes 10 location checks. Additional checks cost around 50p each.



REVIEW SMARTPHONE GPS KIT

NAVICORE Personal for Symbian Series 60

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £200 inc VAT

SUPPLIER O2, 08702 410202

DETAILS www.navicoretech.com



Navicore's Personal is the first GPS navigation system to be designed for the Symbian Series 60 operating system used by Nokia and Siemens smartphones. The kit contains a Bluetooth GPS receiver and an MMC card containing the Navicore software and maps.

Installation is simple. Once you have installed the memory card in your smartphone, the software pops up in the Symbian programs menu. To pair with the receiver, simply select Activate GPS in the software's main menu and choose the receiver in the Bluetooth device menu. The receiver uses the new SiRF III GPS receiver, so it is far easier to pick up weak GPS satellite signals in town or when the receiver is stashed in your car's glove box.

Planning a route is easy thanks to the Navicore software's logical interface. A destination can be found by entering the first four characters of the postcode or searching by street name and number. Waypoints can be set along the way for places to eat, fill up with petrol or visit. The Points of Interest (POI) database is comprehensive, with many tourist attractions and historical sites covered. You cannot download new POI files from the internet, but Navicore claims to be creating a utility that will allow users to add their own.

Route calculation is fast; even complicated routes with several waypoints take less than 20 seconds to plot. The Navicore Personal is also very fast at recalculating the route should you take a

wrong turn, which is vital for getting back on track as quickly as possible. There is a choice of top-down 2D and 3D displays, plus a simple screen showing the route as a series of steps. The display updated smoothly on our Nokia 6600, but there is a delay when zooming in and out. Voice prompts are given with plenty of warning and repeated when the junction is reached, and are loud and clear with the option of a male or female voice.

Most modern GPS systems have a roadblock avoidance utility; this is the best we've seen. After selecting the option in the menu, a map of the area is displayed. Click affected roads to make them disappear from the map. The software finds a way round the affected area.

This is an easy-to-use, incredibly quick GPS system. Route calculation and recalculation is fast, and the POI database is great. It's not cheap, but it's the best GPS system for a Series 60.

Chris Finnamore



Fast route calculation; clear interface and map display



Zooming in and out of maps can be slow

SPECIFICATIONS GPS Navigation for Symbian Series 60 OS, SiRF III Bluetooth GPS receiver, UK maps. Part code 133-8432

HOTLIST SMARTPHONE

ORANGE SPV C500

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE From free to £130 inc VAT

depending on contract

SUPPLIER Orange 0500 802080

DETAILS www.orange.co.uk



The C500 is the smallest smartphone on the market and has an excellent 2.1" colour screen, Bluetooth, micro SD card slot and 64MB of memory. Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition is a vast improvement over its predecessor. If you want to stay organised on the move, this smartphone is easily the best one for the job.

SPECIFICATIONS Windows Mobile 2003 Second Edition, 64MB memory, tri-band phone, colour screen, 640x480 camera. Part code C500

HOTLIST SMARTPHONE

PALMONE Treo 650

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £400 SIM-free; £100-£200 w/contract

SUPPLIER www.dabs.com (SIM-free);

www.orange.co.uk (contract)

DETAILS www.palmone.com



The Treo 650 replaces palmOne's previous smartphone, the Treo 600. It runs the latest version of Palm OS and has a much-improved, higher-resolution screen. The normal Graffiti handwriting recognition system is replaced by a QWERTY keyboard under the screen, which is easy to use. It also works well as a phone despite its chunky size. It's expensive SIM-free, but better value with a mobile phone contract.

SPECIFICATIONS Smartphone, Palm OS 5.4.5, 312MHz Intel PXA270 processor, 23MB RAM, VGA camera, Bluetooth, infrared, GPRS, SD card slot. Part code 1040EU



REVIEW PDA

PALMONE
LifeDrive

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £300 inc VAT

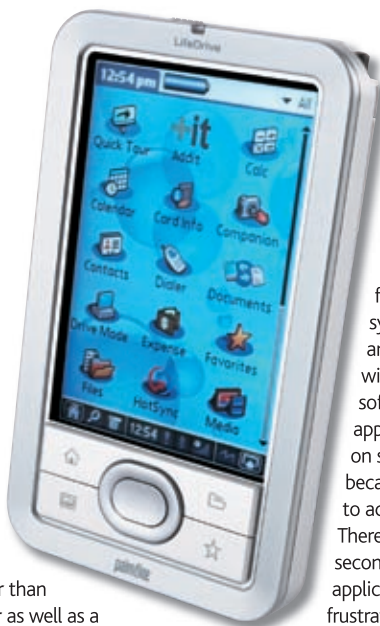
SUPPLIER www.microanvika.comDETAILS www.palmone.com

PalmOne's LifeDrive is aimed at the top end of the PDA market, and its design reflects this. It looks very expensive, with a brushed metal front and back and large solid metal short cut buttons under the screen.

The LifeDrive is part of palmOne's Mobile Manager range, and is the first PDA to use a 4GB Hitachi Microdrive for storage rather than flash memory. This is a media player as well as a device for storing contact and calendar information. Getting media content on to the player is very easy using the LifeDrive Manager software. Once you have synchronised the PDA with your PC using the supplied USB cable, your video, image or audio files can be dropped into the relevant folders on the LifeDrive. The software gives you the option to leave the files as they are for storage or convert them for playback on the PDA.

The LifeDrive doesn't come with headphones, but if you plug in your own it works well as an MP3 player. Video is disappointing, though. The conversion process is slow and playback on the PDA is jerky and too dark, even with the screen at full brightness. Images are bright and clear on the screen, but the conversion process stripped much of the detail from digital photos. Photos left in their original resolution look far better.

One of the most useful features is the Camera Companion function. This lets you transfer images



from your digital camera's SD card to the LifeDrive, and would be ideal on a long holiday where you want to take hundreds of photos.

The downside to the LifeDrive's capacity is its relatively slow speed. The LifeDrive is still a fully featured PDA that synchronises with Outlook and has built-in Bluetooth and wireless networking, but its software runs slowly. Loading applications takes longer than on such devices as the Treo 650 because the hard disk is slower to access than flash memory. There is a delay of a couple of seconds when loading new applications, which can be frustrating if you are used to the instant loading times of a normal

Palm OS device. Fortunately, frequently used programs are cached in the internal 64MB of memory, helping them to load faster.

No handheld can do as much as palmOne's LifeDrive, and £300 for a PDA and hard disk media player is great value. It doesn't run as quickly as most Palm OS devices and its video playback is disappointing, but the multimedia software and quality audio are the best available on a PDA.

Chris Finnamore



Good value; impressive audio playback



Poor video support; slow for a Palm OS device

SPECIFICATIONS Multimedia PDA, Palm OS 5.4 (Garnet), 416MHz Intel XScale processor, 3.85GB available disk space, Bluetooth, 802.11b wireless networking, SD card slot

HOTLIST POCKET PC

ACER
n50 Premium

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £240 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dabs.comDETAILS www.acer.co.uk

Acer's n50 won a Best Buy award in our PDA Megatrust (Labs, Shopper August 2005) with its powerful performance, stylish looks and low price. It has a brushed metal effect casing and simple, uncluttered design. Applications start up almost instantly. It has good battery life and infrared, Bluetooth and wireless networking built in, as well as a generous 124MB of user-available storage. Excellent value.



SPECIFICATIONS Intel PXA272 520MHz processor, 124.27MB RAM, SD card slot, Windows Mobile 2003 SE, weighs 150g. Part code CP.N500H.024

HOTLIST POCKET PC

DELL
Axim X50v

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £262 inc VAT

SUPPLIER Dell 08701 524649

DETAILS www.dell.co.uk

Dell's Axim X50v is simply the best Pocket PC we've seen. A 624MHz processor, 192MB of memory and a 640x480 colour screen make it a powerful package. Add in the 3D graphics chip and you can also play games on it. With WiFi and Bluetooth included in the bundle, it's excellent value for money.



SPECIFICATIONS 624MHz processor, 64MB RAM, 128MB ROM, SD/MMC/SDIO slot, Type II CompactFlash slot, Bluetooth, 802.11b WiFi, infrared, USB docking cradle, 175g, Windows Mobile 2003 for Pocket PC Second Edition

CHOOSING...

GPS
KITSix points to bear in mind
when buying GPS equipment

If you want a satellite navigation system, you don't have to have it built into your car for a four-figure sum. A PDA, GPS receiver and software with routing abilities can do the job better for as little as £290.

1 The receiver is usually a black box the size of a matchbox but it can be in jacket format, so your PDA slides into it, or a CompactFlash card. All the popular software packages allow you to navigate to a location by entering its address or by finding it on a map.

2 A PDA bought to run navigation software will also offer all the usual PDA functions and be compatible with other applications, so you can use it for work when you're not driving. GPS software is available for both the Palm and Pocket PC platforms. If you choose to buy a bundle it is wise to check the model of PDA included and look at its reviews. Some suppliers may bundle grey imports or discontinued models in order to offer a lower price.

3 Bluetooth GPS receivers transfer data wirelessly to your PDA and reduce the number of cables cluttering up your car. The cost is significantly higher because you need a PDA with Bluetooth capability, and there's another battery to keep charged.

4 Two popular bundled software packages are TomTom Navigator 5 and Navman Smart ST Pro 3. They both include 3D views and allow you to navigate according to address.

5 Some products, such as TomTom Navigator 5, can be set up to display real-time traffic information on your route ahead. This adds to the cost because data must be subscribed to and downloaded using a mobile phone.

FILL IN YOUR SPECS HERE
(Recommended minimum in grey)

PDA: Pocket PC or Palm OS

GPS RECEIVER: Wired or jacket

MAP COVERAGE: UK

TRAFFIC DATA: No